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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/929,412

08/14/2001

Norman Ken Ouchi

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7590

06/20/2006

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EXAMINER

JARRETT, SCOTT L

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

DATE MAILED: 06/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/929,412

Applicant(s)

OUCHI, NORMAN KEN

Examiner

Scott L. Jarrett

Art Unit

3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 May 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 37,40-45,47-51 and 53-59 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 37,40-45,47-51 and 53-59 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submissions filed on May 1, 2006 and April 7, 2006 have been entered.

Applicant's amendment, filed April 7, 2006, amended Claims 37, 40-45, 47-51 and 53-56, canceled claims 1-36, 38-39, 46 and 52 and added new claims 57-59. Currently Claims 37, 40-45, 47-51 and 53-59 are pending.

Response to Amendment

2. Applicant's amendment filed April 7, 2006 with respect to amended Claims 37, 40-45, 47-51 and 53-56, canceled claims 1-36, 38-39, 46 and 52 and added new claims 57-59 necessitated new grounds of rejection.

It is noted in that the Applicant's remarks filed April 7, 2006 incorrectly refers to the title of the instant application, the current title is "Method and System for Adapting the Execution of a Workflow Route" as amended by the Applicant in the amendment filed November 11, 2005.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed April 7, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Specifically Applicant argues that the prior art of record teaches that the adaptive workflow methods/systems require the specification, at design time, of all potential route selections (candidate routes) in contrast to the instant application, which avoids a priori route specification. Applicant further argues that the prior art of record requires complex knowledge, tools and/or skills to implement/design routes. (Paragraph 2, Page 1).

With respect to applicant's argument that the prior art of record fails to teach the dynamic (at run-time, on the fly, etc.) specification/selection of process routes which are not specified a priori the examiner respectfully disagrees.

eFlow teaches that processes (workflows, routes, etc.) do not require the complete specification of all potential/candidate routes at design time wherein the adaptive workflow system/method specifically provides several mechanisms, such as the generic service node/process, service discovery, composite services and service selection rules, for adapting the route of a process at the time of its execution (e.g. new and/or modified services can be added at run-time or even during the ongoing execution of a currently running process as well as provides for the deletion/removal of services/process steps from the route).

“To support the dynamic creation of process definitions for composite services, the *eFlow* model includes the *generic service node*. Generic service nodes support dynamic process definitions for composite services such as *custoMove*, mentioned in Section 2. Unlike ordinary service nodes, generic service nodes are not statically bound or limited to a specific set of services. Instead, they include a configuration parameter that can be set with a list of actual services either at process instantiation time (through the process instance input parameters) or at runtime, by a previously executed service node. The specified services will be executed in parallel or sequentially depending on an *executionMode* attribute of the generic service node.”

(reference A: Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5).

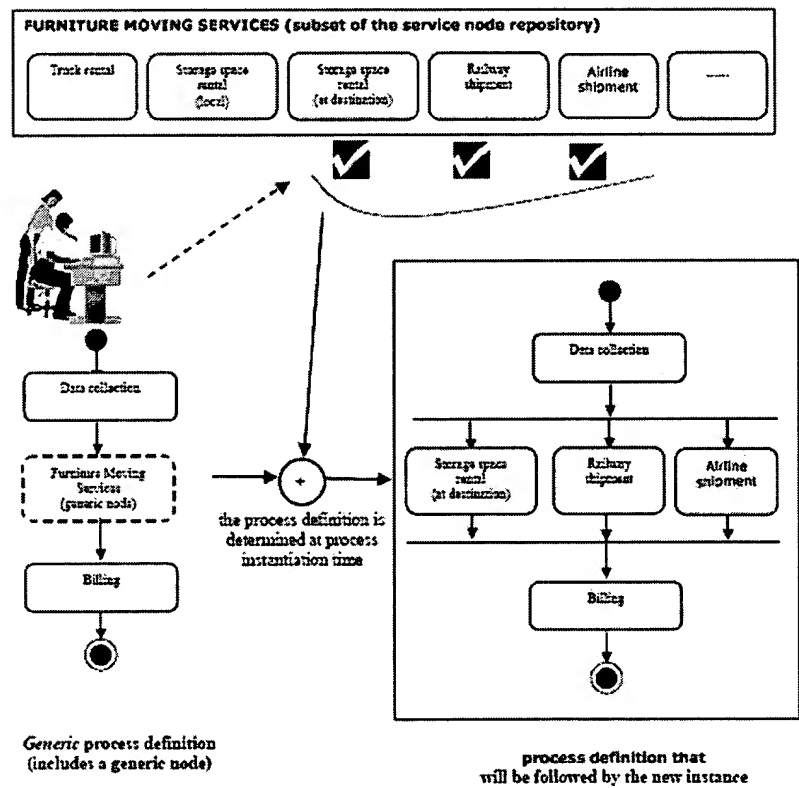


Figure 7 - The *custoMove* generic process is fully defined at process instantiation time, based on the customer's choices

(reference A: Figure 7)

Further it is noted that the dynamic/adaptive workflow systems by their very nature provide for the dynamic (at run-time, on the fly, etc.) specification/selection of process routes, which are not specified a priori, as evidenced by at least Heintz, Petra et al., A Comprehensive Approach to Flexibility in Workflow Management Systems (1999), as cited in the previous office action (Column 2, Page 79; Column 1, Page 80; Section 2.4, Page 82; Section 3.1, Pages 82-83).

Further in response to the applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., that the instant application does *not* require the a priori specification of routes) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

It is noted that the applicant did not challenge the officially noticed facts cited in the previous office action(s) therefore those statements as presented are herein after prior art. Specifically it has been established that it was old and well known in the art at the time of the invention to link processes and/or sub processes (sub flows, sub-routes, etc.) utilizing forward (next) and back (return) links (relationships, dependencies).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

5. Claims 57-59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

Specifically the disclosure fails to state or teach one of ordinary skill in the art how to select (determine, create, generate, etc.) a sub-set of possible steps where the sub-set is selected based on selection factors including the process, the process step to be adapted, the location where the process is executed or route design insight Without this disclosure one skilled in the art would be unable to practice the invention without undue experimentation.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. Claims 37, 40-45, 47-51 and 53-56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Hewlett-Packard's eFlow system and method as evidenced by at least the following:

I. Casati et al., eFlow: a Platform for Developing and Management Composite e-Services (March 2000), herein after reference A; and

II. Casati et al., Adaptive and Dynamic Service Composition in eFlow (March 2000), herein after reference B.

Regarding Claims 37 and 51 eFlow teaches a method and system to adapt a route (workflow, path, sequence of steps, etc.) to implement a process (workflow, method, steps, "service process", etc.) comprising (reference A: Figures 4-5 and 7; reference B: Paragraphs 3-4, Page 3; Figure 5):

- dividing the process into a sequence of process steps (activities, sub-workflows, tasks, etc.; i.e. defining the workflow route; reference A: Column 2, Paragraphs 2-3, Page 2; Figures 3-8; reference B: Figure 1);
- assigning to each process step (workflow, sub-route, sub-workflow, activity, task, service, etc.), except the first process step for which a workflow step is to be

Art Unit: 3623

specified during the execution of the route, a workflow step to implement the process step where the sequence of workflow steps creates a route ("dynamic service discovery", "multiservice nodes", "generic nodes", "service selection rule"; reference A: Column 1, Paragraphs 2-3, Page 3; Figures 6-8; reference B: Section 4.1 "Dynamic Service Node Creation", Page 5);

- including in the sequence of the route prior to the first process step (position) an adaptive (dynamic, runtime, etc.) workflow step to specify/select a process step from a list of process step candidates (i.e. the system and/or users choose from a dynamic list of alternative processes/sub-processes referred to as services which both specify and modify subsequent processes/workflows; reference A: "First, the process invokes the Data collection II service to ask customers to determine the services they need among those offered by eMove level II and collect the data required by those chosen services.", Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; "Instead, they include a list of actual services either at process instantiation time (through the process instance input parameters) or at runtime, by a previously executed service node.", Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Section 4.1 "Dynamic Service Node Creation", Page 5; Figure 7; reference B: decision nodes, composite/generic services, dynamic service discovery; Last Paragraph, Page 3; "select the appropriate service depending on the customer's requirements", Bullet 1, Page 7; service selection rules; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; "ListOf(Service_Node)", Paragraph 1, Page 10) where each process step candidate (potential, alternative, possible, etc.) provides a corresponding workflow step to implement the first process step ("dynamic service discovery",

"multiservice nodes", "generic nodes", "service selection rule"; reference A: Column 1, Paragraphs 2-3, Page 3; Section 4.1 "Dynamic Service Node Creation", Page 5; Section 4.2 "Dynamic Service Instance Process Modification", Page 6; Figures "Data Collection", 3-6; reference B: Section 3.1 "Dynamic Service Discovery", Page 7; Section 3.2 "Multiservice Nodes", Page 8; Section 3.3 "Dynamic Service Node Creation", Page 9); and

- executing the route in a workflow system such that the adaptive workflow step executes and specifies/selects the first process step and adapts the route to implement the process by inserting the selected workflow step (candidate process; i.e. replace a generic/abstract node/process with the actual node/service/process) into the route to implement the first process step (i.e. specifies subsequent step which adapts the route; reference A: Column 1, Paragraphs 2-3, Page 3; Section 4.1, Page 5; Section 4.2, Page 6; Figures 3-6; reference B: Section 3.1, Page 7; Section 3.2, Page 8; Section 3.3, Page 9).

Regarding Claims 40 and 53 eFlow teaches a method and system to adapt a route (workflow, path, process) wherein the adaptive (dynamic, runtime, etc.) workflow step (generic service node) specifies a sub-process (sub-workflow, sub-route, sub-path, nested, etc.) with associated sub-route, a sequence of workflow steps (composite services, multiservice nodes, service selection rule; reference A: Paragraph 2, Page 1; Section 3 "Composing and Managing e-Services", Page 4; Figures 2, 4, 6; reference B: Paragraphs 1-4, Page 8; Paragraphs 2-4, Page 4; Section 3.3 "Dynamic Service

Art Unit: 3623

Creation", Page 9), by selecting from a list (repository, directory, alternatives, decision node, etc.) of sub-processes (reference A: Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Section 4.1 "Dynamic Service Node Creation", Page 5; Figure 7; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Bullet 1, Page 7; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; Paragraph 1, Page 10).

Regarding Claim 41 eFlow teaches a method and system to adapt a route wherein the adaptive workflow step specifies a sub-process with an associated sub-route from a library of sub-processes (reference A: Section 5 "Process templates, service nodes and service node data repositories", Page 6; Column 1, Paragraphs 1-3, Page 8; reference B: Section 3.1, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9) by selecting a sub-process from a list of sub-processes (alternatives, service discovery, service selection from a repository/list of available processes; reference A: Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Section 4.1 "Dynamic Service Node Creation", Page 5; Figure 7; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Bullet 1, Page 7; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; Paragraph 1, Page 10).

Regarding Claims 42 and 54 eFlow teaches a method and system to adapt a route wherein the adaptive workflow step specifies a sub-process with an associated sub-route, include an adaptive workflow step (reference A: Column 1, Paragraphs 2-3, Page 3; Section 4.1, Page 5; Section 4.2, Page 6; Figures 3-6; reference B: Section 3.1, Page 7; Section 3.2, Page 8; Section 3.3, Page 9), by selecting a sub-process from

a list of sub-processes (reference A: Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Section 4.1 “Dynamic Service Node Creation”, Page 5; Figure 7; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Bullet 1, Page 7; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; Paragraph 1, Page 10).

Regarding Claims 43 and 55 eFlow teaches a method and system to adapt a route wherein the adaptive workflow step specifies a parallel (reference A: Figure 5; reference B: Paragraphs 3-4, Page 4; Paragraph 3, Page 8; Figures 5, 8) sub-process with associated sub-route by selecting a sub-process from a list of sub-processes (reference A: Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Section 4.1 “Dynamic Service Node Creation”, Page 5; Figure 7; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Bullet 1, Page 7; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; Paragraph 1, Page 10).

Regarding Claims 44 and 56 eFlow teaches a method and system to adapt a route wherein the adaptive workflow steps modifies a sub-process associated with a sub-route (reference A: Column 1, Paragraphs 2-3, Page 3; Section 4.1, Page 5; Section 4.2, Page 6; Figures 3-6; reference B: Section 3.1, Page 7; Section 3.2, Page 8; Section 3.3, Page 9) and specifies the modified sub-route by selecting the sub-process from a list of sub-processes (reference A: Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; “As the customer submits the form a new instance of the custoMove process is started, and the list of selected services is passed as part of

Art Unit: 3623

the instance input parameter, in order to configure the generic service node Furniture Moving Services. The new instance will now be executed where the generic service node has been replaced by a set of service nodes (whose definition is loaded from the service node repository, defined next) to be executed in parallel, according to the customer's input and to the generic service node specification.”, Column 2, Paragraph 3, Page 5; Section 4.1 “Dynamic Service Node Creation”, Page 5; Section 4.2 “Dynamic service process instance modification”, Page 6; Figure 7; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Bullet 1, Page 7; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; Paragraph 1, Page 10).

Regarding Claim 45 eFlow teaches a workflow system and method for adapting a route (workflow, process, path, etc.) while processing (executing, performing, etc.) the route comprising:

- a computer (“eFlow engine”; reference B: Page 5, Figure 5);
- an adaptive workflow program (subsystem, code, module, etc.) wherein the subsystem provides an adaptive (dynamic, runtime, etc.) step to specify a subsequent step in a route by selecting a step from a list of step candidates (alternatives) during the processing of the route by the computer/system (generic node, service node, service selection rules, etc.; reference A: Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Section 4.1 “Dynamic Service Node Creation”, Page 5; Figure 7; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Bullet 1, Page 7; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; Paragraph 1, Page 10);

- a route (process, path, workflow, etc.), containing an adaptive step (node, process, service, alternative paths, etc.; reference A: Section 4.1 Dynamic service node creation, Page 5; Section 4.2 Dynamic service process instance modification, Page 6; Figure 7), stored in the system (computer);

- processing (running, executing, performing, etc.) the route, by the workflow subsystem/program, and the routes adaptive step specifies the subsequent step in the route by inserting the selected step in the route as the subsequent step thereby adapting the route (reference A: "First, the process invokes the Data collection II service to ask customers to determine the services they need among those offered by eMove level II and collect the data required by those chosen services.", Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; "Instead, they include a list of actual services either at process instantiation time (through the process instance input parameters) or at runtime, by a previously executed service node.", Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Section 4.1 "Dynamic Service Node Creation", Page 5; Figure 7; reference B: decision nodes, composite/generic services, dynamic service discovery; Last Paragraph, Page 3; "select the appropriate service depending on the customer's requirements", Bullet 1, Page 7; service selection rules; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9).

Regarding Claim 47 eFlow teaches an adaptive workflow system and method wherein the adaptive step specifies a sub-route, a sequence of steps, by selecting the sub-route from a list of candidate sub-routes (reference A: Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Section 4.1 "Dynamic Service Node Creation",

Page 5; Figure 7; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Bullet 1, Page 7; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; Paragraph 1, Page 10).

Regarding Claim 48 eFlow teaches an adaptive workflow system and method wherein the adaptive step specifies a sub-route, which includes an adaptive step (composite service, generic service) by selecting a sub-route from a list of candidate sub-routes (reference A: Column 1, Paragraphs 2-3, Page 3; Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Section 4.1 "Dynamic Service Node Creation", Page 5; Figure 7; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Bullet 1, Page 7; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; Paragraph 1, Page 10)

Regarding Claim 49 eFlow teaches an adaptive workflow system and method wherein the adaptive step specifies parallel (reference A: Figure 5; reference B: Paragraphs 3-4, Page 4; Paragraph 3, Page 8; Figures 5, 8) sub-routes by selecting a sub-route from a list of candidate sub-routes (reference A: Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Section 4.1 "Dynamic Service Node Creation", Page 5; Figure 7; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Bullet 1, Page 7; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; Paragraph 1, Page 10).

Regarding Claim 50 eFlow teaches an adaptive workflow system and method wherein the adaptive step modifies a sub-route (reference A: Column 1, Paragraphs 2-3, Page 3; Section 4.1, Page 5; Section 4.2, Page 6; Figures 3-6; reference B: Section

Art Unit: 3623

3.1, Page 7; Section 3.2, Page 8; Section 3.3, Page 9) and specifies the modified sub-route by selecting a sub-route from a list of candidate sub-routes (reference A: Column 1, Paragraph 1, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 2, Page 5; Column 2, Paragraph 3, Page 5; Section 4.1 "Dynamic Service Node Creation", Page 5; Section 4.2 "Dynamic service process instance modification", Page 6; Figure 7; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Bullet 1, Page 7; Paragraphs 3-4, Page 7; Last Paragraph, Page 9; Paragraph 1, Page 10).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 57-59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over unpatentable over Hewlett-Packard's eFlow system and method as evidenced by at least the following:

I. Casati et al., eFlow: a Platform for Developing and Management Composite e-Services (March 2000), herein after reference A; and

II. Casati et al., Adaptive and Dynamic Service Composition in eFlow (March 2000), herein after reference B.

as applied to claims 37, 40-45, 47-51 and 53-56 above.

Regarding Claims 57-59 eFlow teaches an adaptive workflow system and method wherein the list of candidate steps (sub-routes, processes, workflows, paths, routes, etc.) is a sub-set of possible steps where the sub-set is selected based on selection factors (selection policies, selection rules, selection service, selection criteria, service discovery, routing conditions; reference B: Last Paragraph, Page 3; Last Two Paragraphs, Page 7; Paragraph 2, Page 8).

eFlow does is silent on the specific selection factors utilized and subsequently does not expressly teach that the selection factors include the process, the process step to be adapted, the location where the process is executed or route design insight as claimed; however, these differences are only found in the non-functional descriptive material and are not functionally involved in the steps recited nor do they alter the recited structural elements. The recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the specific selection criteria/rules/policies used to select the next/subsequent process step. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the specific selection criteria/rules/policies used to select the next/subsequent process step. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); MPEP 2106.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Natarajan, Kadathur, U.S. Patent No. 5,452,294, teaches a system and method to adapt the route of a process wherein the first process is an adaptive process steps that selects the next/subsequent process steps from a list of candidate process steps (route list).

- Artsy, Yeshayahu, U.S. Patent No. 5,701,484, teaches a system and method for adapting the route of a process (object workflow, action path) wherein each step is an adaptive process step that dynamically determines (selects, finds) the next/subsequent process step (action stop) as well as identifies/finds the resource (person, principal) required for the next/subsequent step.

Artsy further teaches it is old and well known to adapt a process (workflow, route) by dynamically evaluating at each process step the path (subsequent process steps) based on the current process, process state or other information.

- Randell, Jim, U.S. Patent No. 5,745,687, teaches an adaptive workflow system and method wherein an adaptive process step (node) selects (determines) subsequent/next process steps dynamically (routing nodes, modifying nodes).

- Eichstaedt et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,510,431, teaches an system and method to adapt a route wherein the first (or any) process step is an adaptive process step that specifies/selects the next process step from a list of process step candidates (e.g.

determines whom to route customer requests to based on the content/context of the customer request).

- Smirnov et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,546,431, teaches an adaptive workflow system and method wherein an adaptive process step (node) selects "any one of a plurality of feasible routes from completion of the process."

- Schuyler et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,832,202, teach an adaptive workflow system and method wherein an adaptive process step dynamically selects (routes) a subset of next process steps (e.g. "automatically determines approvals required for authorization of a request"; routes a document needing approval to a dynamical list of resources/personnel).

- Casati et al., U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0161823, teaches an adaptive workflow system and method wherein the process comprises an adaptive process step that dynamically/adaptively selects and inserts the next/subsequent process step from a list (group node) of candidate process steps ("The workflow engine accesses the node group database for the group of work nodes when the generic node is to be executed so as to allow dynamic composition and modification of the workflow process"; Paragraphs 0015-0016, 0031-32, 0046-0049; Figure 3).

- Ghoneimy et al., U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0078373, teach method and system to adapt a route to implement a process comprising: a workflow engine, dynamic role assignment/management module (dynamically, e.g. context sensitive role assignment, assign/reassign personnel to process steps at run-time), run-time role

Art Unit: 3623

resolution and adaptive process steps (nodes) having a list of candidate process steps (choices), sub processes as well as a list of task alternatives.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott L. Jarrett whose telephone number is (571) 272-7033. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hafiz Tariq can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



SJ
6/15/2006



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SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600